

Veterans Affairs

In the area of health:

A significantly lower percentage of Dieppe POW than that of any other study group report that their health has remained unchanged over the past ten years.

Significantly more POW than Controls report premature aging as being responsible for deterioration of their health.

Significantly more Controls than POW report increases or worsening in pensioned disabilities as being responsible for deterioration in their health.

There is little difference between total POW and Controls in reporting the onset of non-pensioned disabilities as being responsible for deterioration in their health. On a sub-group basis, the Dieppe POW report a significantly lower incidence of non-pensioned disabilities than any other sub-group.

The Dieppe POW report a significantly higher incidence than any other group of experiencing a combination of the three factors which in the author's opinion, for the purposes of this study, constitute a general deterioration in health, i.e., premature aging, increase in pensioned disabilities, or onset of non-pensioned disabilities.

A significantly higher percentage of POW than Controls report nervous conditions. On a sub-group basis the Dieppe POW report the highest incidence of nervous conditions.

Approximately the same percentage of POW and Controls report that their nervous conditions have had adverse effects on their wives and children. On a sub-group basis, a higher percentage of Dieppe POW report adverse effects from this source on their families.

There is little difference in percentages between total POW and Controls in reporting whether their families were adversely affected by lack of contact due to incarceration or wartime service. On a sub-group basis, the Dieppe POW report a significantly higher incidence of adverse effects resulting from lack of contact.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out that, in any event, examination of the report reveals that the specific study made of the Dieppe POW proves that they suffered more than the others.

● (1620)

Besides, I remember that the Minister for Veterans Affairs had told the House that, broadly speaking, the government had decided that the recommendations Dr. Hermann put forward in his report would not be accepted but that, on the other hand, it would uphold its final decision until such time when the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs would issue its report.

Today we have the long awaited decisions of the committee. Mr. Speaker, I think it can truly be said that the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs has, on many occasions in the past, demonstrated that it was unprejudiced and genuinely eager to improve the lot of the veterans.

The recommendations which are being presented to us today may be regarded as reliable and it is our duty to see to it that they be passed. For it is a well known fact, Mr. Speaker, that for years veterans have been hoping that the consideration of their case would result in recommendations aiming at the fulfilment of their needs.

We must admit, Mr. Speaker, that the Dieppe prisoners were treated in a very brutal manner. Incidentally, the effects of imprisonment still remain. We are now aware that it is urgent to meet favourably the requests of the Dieppe prisoners as well as those of all the others, because we must admit that World War II prisoners captured during the Dieppe battle have suffered as much, if not more, as any other Canadian veterans.

[Mr. Allard.]

Unfortunately it seems that those prisoners have yet to gain sympathy from the government, considering Dr. Hermann's report which tries to give those war prisoners the same status as that of Hong Kong prisoners which has long since been recognized. Mr. Speaker, why are they refused what they deserve, for they deserve it as much or even more than Hong Kong prisoners.

In my opinion, those men suffered as much as those captured in Hong Kong and, in all fairness, their requests should be granted. If we judge by what has been said, the recommendations which have been made are not that much exaggerated and meet quite adequately the real needs of former prisoners of war.

Mr. Speaker, it would be normal to treat these people in the same way as all veterans and prisoners who, because of distress or traumatism provoked either by their capture or imprisonment, also suffer physiological troubles.

In fact, if I am not mistaken, the veterans captured at Dieppe in 1942 were interned longer than any other group of Canadians serving overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of course that the Canadian government probably agrees that these proposals are timely in view of the present economic and social conditions. I therefore hope with all my heart that the government will understand the significance of the unanimous decision made by the committee and will also ensure that all necessary action is taken for this proposal to adequately meet the needs of former prisoners of war, because I believe that they must live in honour and dignity, and that if there is a group who deserves a special place in our society, it truly is that of those prisoners of war.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, once again, it is with great pleasure that I support the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I hope that many anonymous members, as was so ably said by the government member, will take their responsibilities and reflect for a few moments on all the suffering that these brave soldiers had to face to defend our freedom. In fact, I have before me the Minister of Veterans Affairs who lost an arm and a leg himself, I believe. I am convinced that if he goes back a few years to the time when he was fighting with his brothers in arms to defend our liberty, he will agree that all these brave soldiers, all these former prisoners, deserve all our understanding. I therefore believe that in all fairness, we should follow up on the report now before the House.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and once again I hope that the minister will be able to bring us good news.

[English]

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Under the Standing Orders of this House, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave):

That the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe be now heard.

● (1630)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) has risen on a point of order under Standing Order 29, at page 24 of our Standing Orders, which reads as follows: